3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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3. Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

payments due to the French government.